



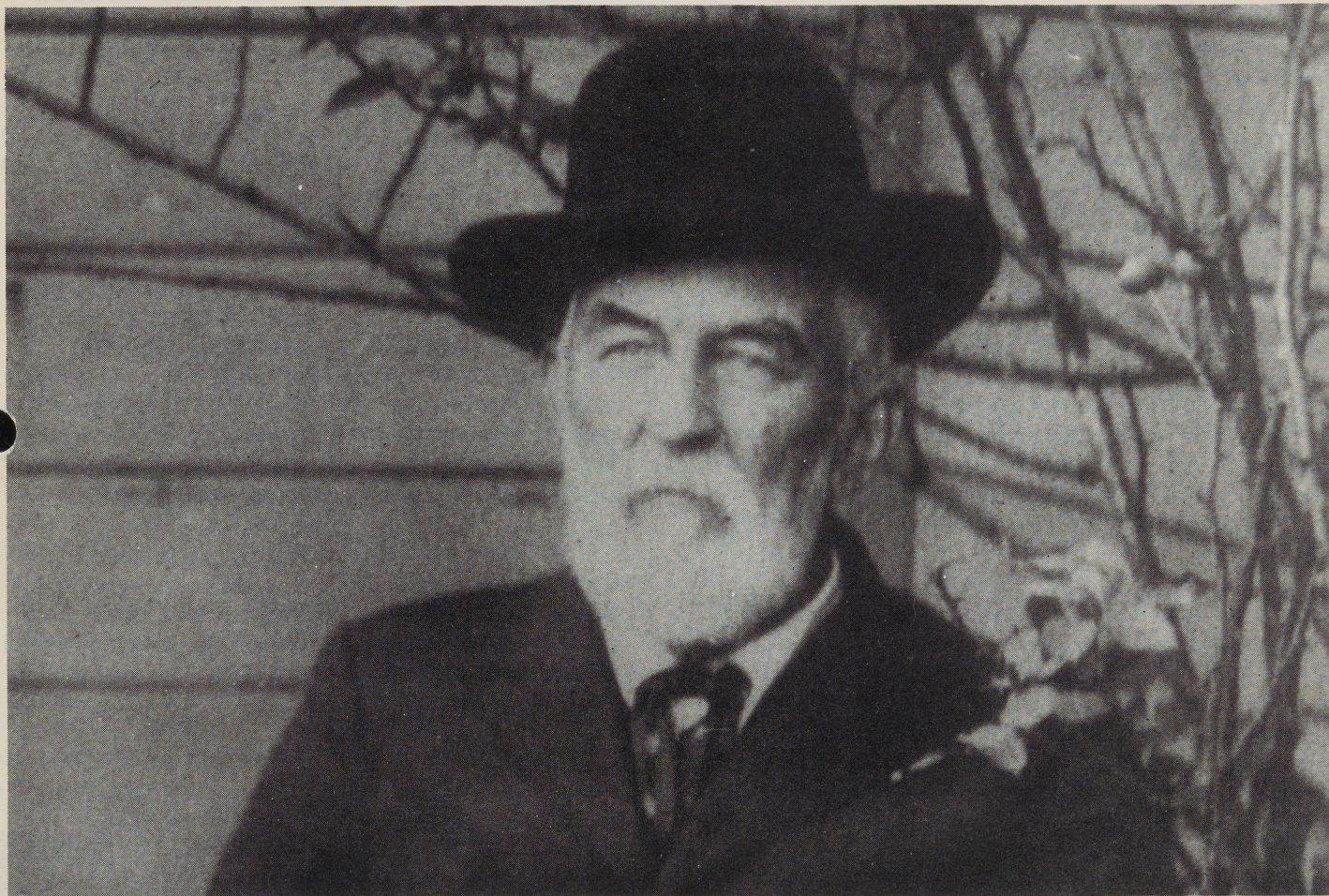
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THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

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JOHN ELY CHAPIN

Mr. Chapin was the first County Supervisor from District 5 in Madera County.

It seems appropriate that a story about J. E. Chapin be written before it will be too late to interview anyone that really knew him.

The following story is one that was published at the time of his death. Mr. and Mrs. William Ellis of North Fork gave the Historical Society this

story and Mr. Chapins' picture.

March 4, 1910

J. E. Chapin, an old and respected resident of Madera county for many years, and a member of its first Board of Supervisors, passed away at the home of his brother, S. T. Chapin, at Elmhurst, last Saturday night, at the age of 76 years, 4 months, and 14 days. The funeral was held yesterday, the body being cremated in Oakland.

John Ely Chapin was born in Wayne county, New York, October 18, 1834. In 1844 the family moved to Michigan, where Ely attended school in Adrian, then Hudson, and lastly in Grand Rapids.

From there he went to Lowell, Mich., and entered the general merchandise store of his father and brother-in-law, under the firm name of Chapin & Booth, succeeding later to his father's interest. Soon after the national banking system was inaugurated in the early '60s he was instrumental in establishing the Lowell National Bank, and became its first cashier.

Lured by the attractions of a larger field of operations he moved to Chicago and engaged in the wholesale notion business in connection with a New York firm. Failure of the New York house and withdrawal of their capital necessitated the closing of the Chicago house.

After a few years of varying success Mr. Chapin came to California in 1882, to manage a mine at Fine Gold in this county, which, however, proved to have no value. His mine was called the 'Ora Fine'.

Thrown upon his own resources again, he came to Madera, engaged in merchandising for a few years, and later returned to the foothills and purchased a ranch with the intention of raising stock and planting a large apple orchard. With

the financial assistance of his brother, then living in Mexico, he planted about 2000 apple trees in 1892 or 93 and hoped to make the ranch an attractive summer resort. The name Cascadel was given to the ranch at his brother's suggestion and a postoffice established there in the early 90's.

Mr. Chapin was the first supervisor of his district, District 5, upon the formation of Madera county from a part of Fresno county, and while an incumbent of that office affected a great improvement in the mountain roads of that district.

While supervisor Mr. Chapin had a hobby for good roads, and while his district was mountainous, he laid the foundations for some of the finest highways in the county.

Mr. Chapin was of an ingenious turn of mind, as his patents for a voting machine abundantly prove. While his invention was a valuable one, his lack of capital and the great cost and necessary influence in getting such a machine adopted, defeated his worthy ambition.

While at his mountain home at Cascadel, Mr. Chapin manufactured a liniment of exceeding merit, but capital to push it was lacking, and it never became known extensively beyond the confines of the county.

He was a man of great courtesy and kindness, with broad views on all subjects. He was a staunch Republican and always took a great interest in political matters.

The latter years of his married life were saddened by the unfortunate illness of his wife, to whom he was faithfully attentive to the last. They had one child, a little girl who died at the age of six. After his wife's death he spent a few months in his old mountain home and then went to Elmhurst, near Oakland, California in 1908 to spend his last days with his brother, S.T.

Chapin, where he passed away.

The following information gives more understanding of J. E. Chapin.

During Mr. Chapin's short term of office as County Supervisor, just 19 months; he accomplished a great deal in improving the roads, in fact it probably cost him his second term because he was defeated in 1894. Mr. Chapin made an error in hiring more road work to be done than could be paid for that year. He was defeated by 33 votes.

Mr. Chapin was interested in good government, politics and progress in the community and county.

Mr. Ellis attributes his own interest in county government to Mr. Chapin.

Mr. Chapin was also the head bookkeeper in Madera's first bank, The Commercial, started by Return Merts. When the Commercial Bank was taken over by the Bank of Italy, Mr. Chapin came back to North Fork, to his old home in Cascadel.

The story is told that he dug a deep hole, buried all of the dishes and personal things, then walked out of the house, said "Good by Cascadel, I'll never see you again". He walked into North Fork, stayed all night with Mr.

Ellis and the next day Mr. Ellis took him to Madera, where he boarded the train for Elmhurst where he died two years later.

CASCADE-CASCADDEL

When Mr. Chapin moved to North Fork in 1888 he purchased the Cascade Ranch, formerly known as Wagners Sheep Range.

This was his home for many years, many of the apple trees mentioned elsewhere in this story are still in that area and were blooming this year. Mrs. Ellis has painted a beautiful picture of the apple trees in bloom.

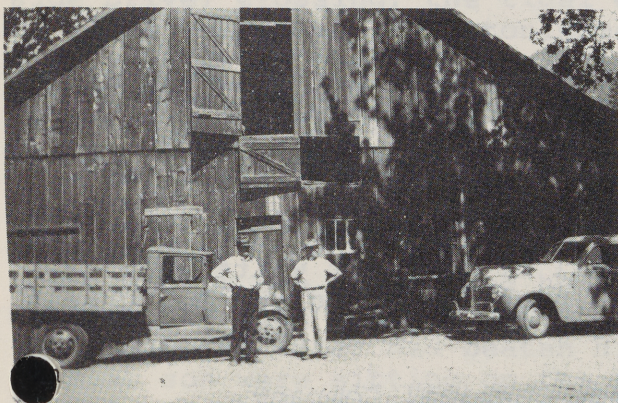
The Cascade Ranch became known as Cascadel and today this area is known as Cascadel Woods. Several beautiful homes have been erected there lately.

Whiskey Creek flows through Cascadel Woods. An old cabin, the Rouse House, is still standing near this stream, built in the late 70's.

Many stories have been told about how Whiskey (Alder) Creek received its name. We will relate just one. Mr. Ellis tells of a Mr. C. E. Strivens, who told the following tale.

"Mr. Strivens said he opened a store in Cascadel, using two barrels and a board across them for a counter. He sold cloth, shoes etc. plus whiskey, mostly whiskey, hence Whiskey Creek."

This photo shows old barn erected on Cascade Ranch in 1890. There was a large silo inside the barn. Wm. Ellis and Lorrin Booth are seen in this picture taken in 1944.



C. C. C.

C. C. C.

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Cascade : Chemical : Company,

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CASCADE OIL

The above Article is the upper half of a hand bill or advertisement that was donated to the Historical Society in 1966 by Mrs. Margaret MacPherson, formerly of North Fork, now in a rest home at Sunnyvale, California.

The lower half of the hand bill gives five letters of testimony from well known citizens of Madera county, namely; Mrs. G. G. Parsons, J. N. Goode, C. Curlin, R. B. Stockton and from Kenney and Coffman, Proprietors of Yosemite Valley Livery Stables.

Every letter rates high the medicinal values of Cascade Oil and according to several people around North Fork it is still considered excellent.

This Cascade Oil contained some of the following ingredients; spearmint, Cassia, Hemlock, wormwood, alcohol and gum champhor.

Mrs. William Ellis has the formula for this oil or liniment written in excellent handwriting by Mr. J. E. Chapin. It was never patented and Mr. Chapin lacked funds to produce it to any extent.

You note the three C's; this stood for Cascade Chemical Company.

The general store of F. H. Driver in North Fork carried the product, at

50¢ per bottle. Mrs. Ellis still has a small bottle of the oil or liniment.

THE ARCHIBALD AND ADOBE RANCH RESERVOIRS

by the late Douglas Houston

An item not mentioned in the late Harry Barnes' highly interesting "History of use of Fresno River Water for Irrigation", (Madera Co. Historian, January and April, 1963) is the time the Archibald and Adobe Ranch Reservoirs broke and the flash floods that resulted. As floods go, these were rather minor affairs, but a short account of them and the reservoir system may be of some interest.

From all accounts there were two breaks, the first about 1904 or 1905 and the second and last in 1914. Excluding the possibility of newspaper files, there seems to be no written records of the first break and other than court records of a damage suit it occasioned, none of the second break.

The court records state that the break occurred "on or about Jan. 26, 1914" and that the flooding occurred about 11 o'clock at night. Several old timers consulted, remember the first break only and are of the opinion that the early break terminated the use of the reservoirs; however, a report by Harry Barnes to the Wild Life Conservation Board concerning the Archibald Reservoir, and dated 1956, states that it was last used in 1914. The report also describes the main levee as 25 ft. high with a 200 foot break near the center. This, together with the court records, rather confirms the second date.

The writer, has no recollection of the second break. This is not surprising, since the peak of the flood occurred in the first part of the night, the flow would have receded to normal high water by morning, the flooded areas were some distance from his regular haunts, and being in the third year of high school he was simply too engrossed with his own affairs to notice anything short of a major catastrophe.

The writer does remember the first break in 1904. While he was a small child at the time, the sight of a two foot wall of water racing down the dry channel of the Fresno River left quite an impression on his young mind. This transpired on one of those happy occasions when he rode to school with his father in the buggy; something that only happened when a trip to town was necessary; other times he walked the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, school buses being unknown in that remote period.

Just as they crossed the S. P. railroad at the old Front Street (now Riverside Drive) crossing, the tidal wave appeared from under the D Street bridge. My father exclaimed in astonishment, then remarked that there must have been a cloudburst in the mountains during the night. He delivered the writer to his school, the old brick building which then occupied the site of the present Armory then father whipped up the horses for home, fearful that his younger son might be playing in the river bed.

At that time the only wagon bridge on the Fresno River in the valley was at D Street, and by the time he returned the street was under water at the south end of the bridge and he was warned that he would cross at his own risk. He took the risk and arrived at his home on the north bank of the river to find that the water had beaten him by a considerable margin, and his wife and younger son were sitting on the bank admiring the spectacle. By the time the writer was released from school, the water had receded and he missed most of the fun.

By all accounts, there was considerable flooding in the Millview district. There is no record of any damage suits, possibly due to the fact that it was somewhat more thinly populated then. The most serious casualty was the foot bridge then located at Austin Avenue and "B" Street. This was washed away and according to accounts, that night a cyclist who had not heard of the event rode his bicycle off the stub of the bridge into the drink, but escaped with nothing more serious than a shaking up and a soaking.

The "D" Street bridge, then a wooden affair with not too deeply driven piles, sagged dangerously on one side and had to be shored up until repairs could be made. The railroad bridge rode it out successfully with the help of the section gang who labored mightily to keep it free from logs and debris. The fact that the writer was attending school while his younger brother had not yet started places this event in either 1904 or 1905, and the sources consulted seem to agree that it was about then.

There seems to be no way of determining just what broke on either of the occasions. The records of the damage suit brought against the company by J. J. Stapp, O. A. Eaton and others is for damage to property in the Millview Addition, which they contended was caused by inadequate structures in the Company's "system of Canals and Weirs".

Harry Barnes in the Historian of 1963, Vol. III-No. 1, states that the reservoirs were designed and built by I. Tielman, an engineer of Fresno, but gives no date for construction or completion. His report to the Wild Life Conservation Board states that the Archibald Reservoir was built in 1910. A map by I. Tielman showing the location and area (not capacity) of the two Reservoirs, was placed on record in the Madera Co. Recorder's Office by R. L. Hargrove May 11, 1904, but gives no clue as to dates of construction.

To the writer it seems probable that the Adobe Reservoir was the first to be built and filled, and its breaking was the occasion of the first flood and termination of its use. This may have stopped further construction until 1910.

The Adobe levee was breached and never repaired. The 200 foot break in the Archibald levee described in Barnes' report terminated the use of the system.

The basis of the reservoir system was two natural basins and a secondary or overflow branch of the Fresno River. This branch left the main channel on the northwest side at a point a few hundred yards above the present crossing of the Madera-Friant Canal; thence meandered southwesterly through the Adobe Reservoir Basin to return to the main channel about four miles lower down, a levee and a few cuts diverted this to the Archibald Basin a mile or so lower.

A dam was constructed just below the entrance of the branch, so that water could be diverted at any level. This consisted of a wooden weir with drop boards across the main channel of the Fresno, and an earth fill levee across the low ground on the southeast side. The weir has long since disappeared but the levee can still be seen from the River Road (County Rd. 400).

The reservoirs were created by earth fill levees across the mouths of the basins and at a few low points or saddles on their borders. The main levee of the Adobe was across the gulch, through which the branch passed. It was some twenty-five feet high and is shown complete with break in the photograph.

The Archibald reservoir with the break repaired and the levees greatly strengthened is the present Lake Madera.



The above picture is such a rare photograph that we felt our readers should see it. The picture was taken May 1, 1891. The man shown is Reese Packard. The location, California Mills. We do not know the animals' name but what is Mr. Packard doing to the ox? (The answer is on page 8, on the last line.)

INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS

Mr. Ray Hillman is the newly elected vice president of Region 8 which includes Madera, Merced, San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties.

Mr. Healy Tondel was the former vice president and the Madera County Historical Society owes much to him. He was a real inspiration to our Executive Board. We are pleased that he continues to be a member of our Society and will participate whenever possible.

Old Timer's Day will be observed again this year. Letters have gone out to all who have registered in past years.

King and Queen this year are Mr. & Mrs. Will Ryan of O'Neals. The Historian congratulates them. They are members too.

The M.C.H.S. has sent the Department of Parks and Recreation a complete history of our "Old Court House", including maps, architects' plans and photographs, to be consid-

ered as a possible nomination for registration in the National Register of Historic Places. We have been informed that our application was received favorably by the California Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee on July 22, 1970.

The Board of Directors of the M.C.H.S. thanks all members who have paid their 1970 dues. As you know we operate at present on the income from membership dues. We are a fast growing group and naturally expenses grow too, so your membership is greatly appreciated.

We have raised several thousand dollars through donations and projects but this money has been placed in a separate account to be used toward making our "Museum" a reality.

Our present membership is 385; 37 are new members this year. There are about 100 that are delinquent at this date, which would make a total of 569.

We keep very busy receiving and cataloging donated Historical items. At this date we have cataloged 3,126 items since January, 1963. There are many more to catalog. We could use help in this area.

You might be interested in the source of some of our gifts; 51 items from the family of the late Elmo Clark, 88 from Maud Bryan and 82 from Kenneth D. Potter, and recently 81 from Walter Williams. Mr. Guy Crow and Walter Williams have brought in many items in the last 7 years. It is impossible to list all the other donors, as our space is limited.

We welcome your suggestions for topics for the Historians. The Historian reaches many people as well as groups and organizations, Library of Congress, New York University, New York State Library, Wisconsin State Historical Society, plus the leading Colleges and

Universities in California.

One of our newer members, Troy Tuggle, Fresno, California has written an excellent story in the "Pacific Historian", summer 1970, Vol. 14 No. 3, Historian of the Valley. The story is about Frank Latta, he also is a member of our Society, many of you know him. Remember "Handbook of the Yokut Indians"?

You might like to know who our Honorary and Life members are at this date:

Mr. & Mrs. William Ellis	North Fork, Calif.
Al Legras	Ahwahnee, Calif.
Mort Peckinpah	Fresno, Calif.
Gene Tully	Fresno, Calif.
Mrs. Sade Smith	Fresno, Calif.
Life Members	
Mrs. Alice Kenney Stewart	San Francisco, Calif.
Mrs. Mae Kenney Butler	Lake Tahoe, Calif.

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

Contributors this Quarter:

Newspaper story and consultants:

Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Ellis, Sr.

Reservoir Story

Douglas Houston deceased

Photos Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Ellis, Sr.

Cascadel Advertisement

Mrs. Margaret MacPherson

Managing Editors-Board of Directors

Madera County Historical Society

Compiled by Maud Lindemann Curator

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(Answer - "Shoeing the OX")